

South Shore Estuary Reserve Technical Advisory Committee Meeting

February 1st, 2022 10:00am – 11:30am

Zoom Meeting

In attendance:

South Shore Estuary Reserve (SSER) Office:

Jeremy Campbell

Sally Kellogg

Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) Members:

Tara Schneider-Moran, TAC Chair, Town of Hempstead

Kathleen Fallon, TAC Vice Chair, New York Sea Grant

Cassie Bauer, New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC)

Derek Betts, Nassau County Soil and Water Conservation District

Michael Bilecki, National Parks Service (NPS)

Chris Clapp, The Nature Conservancy (TNC)

Liz Cole, Long Island Regional Planning Council (LIRPC)

Chantal Collier, The Nature Conservancy (TNC)

Maureen Dolan-Murphy, Citizens Campaign for the Environment/ CAC Chair

Maureen Dunn, Seatuck Environmental Association

Michele Golden, NYSDEC

Rich Groh, Town of Babylon

Emily Hall, Seatuck Environmental Association

Mike Jenson, Suffolk County Department of Health Services

Brad Peterson, Stony Brook University SOMAS

Chris Pickerell, Cornell Cooperative Extension of Suffolk County

Steve Raciti, Hofstra University

Corey Humphrey, Suffolk County Soil and Water Conservation District

Steve Schott, Cornell Cooperative Extension of Suffolk County

Chris Shubert, USGS

Lane Smith, New York Sea Grant

Anthony Valentino, Town of Babylon

Tom Wilson, Stony Brook University SOMAS

Guests

Craig Strong, Town of Brookhaven

Meeting called to order at 10:03am.

Approval of December 7th, 2021 Meeting Minutes

MOTION: pass December meeting minutes. Seconded. Approved.

SSER Office Updates

South Shore Estuary Office is still going through and incorporating CMP comments. The Governor's budget increased the Environmental Protection Fund however the SSER line item

remained the same. There is more funding available for infrastructure projects. It was also noted that R. Neville is currently on leave.

The SSER CAC requested an increase to the SSER line to \$5 million in the final budget which is due April 1st. R. Groh asked for the request to be circulated to the TAC and Council.

Admin Review: TAC Bylaws & Mission Statement, TAC Member List, Communication Methods, Project Priorities List

The Bylaws were reviewed, discussed and clarifications were made. A management advisory committee and a local government advisory committee are named in the SSER legislation but do not currently exist. L. Smith suggested asking members if the current meeting time worked for members, T. Schneider said a poll will be sent to survey members. Member list was reviewed and edited. Procedure was also addressed, voting members should identify themselves at the beginning of the meetings. Communication methods between meetings was discussed, it was noted that google platforms are problematic for federal partners. A survey will be sent asking members their communication preferences. Next meeting will review the project priority list to identify projects as future funding becomes available.

Presentation: SSER LAG Project: Town of Brookhaven Eelgrass Project

Project was carried out by Town of Brookhaven in cooperation with Cornell Cooperative Extension (CCE) of Suffolk County Marine Program. Downwellers were used to hold seed that was collected by partners including The Nature Conservancy, SoMAS Peterson Lab, and Town staff. The downwellers were run year-round with continuous flow of water at 55 degrees Fahrenheit. In October stalks were consolidated before planting. CCE Marine Meadows program was engaged to work with volunteers from the public to weave tortillas, burlap discs with adult eelgrass woven through, which was planted at the restoration sites at the appropriate time. There were 4 restoration planting sites in Bellport Bay and Moriches Bay each 300ft in diameter. Sites were evaluated annually by CCE and have been growing since being planted. See slides for additional details.

Question: Is method not as important as location?

Answer: Location for eelgrass plantings is critical. There is a shrinkage of natural beds which indicates there are issues at play. User conflicts are also important to think of when selecting planting areas. Planting plugs is labor intensive and not usually successful, adult plants and seeds are most successful. Temperature is a big issue, locations near inlets with cool water also contribute to successful growth.

Question: What are the next steps for the program?

Answer: Friends of Bellport Bay has stepped in to help fund the project.

Seagrass Action Plan Discussion & Next Steps

C. Humphrey reviewed the process of creating the draft Seagrass Action Plan document and the subcommittee members. The document identifies the benefits of eelgrass as improving coastal resiliency, improving biodiversity and habitat, contributes to the sequestration of carbon, contributes to the local economy, and improves water quality. Threats to seagrass were also noted and include but are not limited to climate change, sea level rise, poor water quality, loss of habitat, physical disturbances, and biological threats. The current status of seagrass was also

described in the plan and a summary of current efforts to improve seagrass proliferation was created. See slides for additional details.

Then, there was discussion on next steps. S. Kellogg would include the Benthic Mapping link in the document and re-recirculate to the TAC. R. Groh informed the TAC that an outreach sign about eelgrass has been created. The sign will be shared at the next CAC meeting. The draft document will be voted on at the next TAC meeting.

Partner Updates and Other Business

C. Collier: Is leaving TNC Chapter on February 11 and will no longer be an alternate but will identify a new regular member.

C. Schubert: USGS is seeking summer workers, for more information:

<https://www.usgs.gov/centers/new-york-water-science-center/news/field-assistant-recruitment-bulletin>

E. Hall: The diadromous fish working group meeting will be February 1st at 2. Please contact Emily Hall ehall@seatuck.org If anyone wants to be added.; Seatuck is conducting a new culvert project and is hiring two summer workers <https://seatuck.org/careers-and-internships/>.

Mike –The FINS science conference will be April 22 and a field trip on April 23. It is still to be determined if the format will be hybrid or virtual.

Motion to adjourn meeting. Seconded.

Meeting adjourned.